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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses the utilization of role playing and simulation in the training of preservice teachers to acquaint them with the problems of the poor reader. Techniques and teaching procedures discussed include using cryptograms to illustrate the difficulties the poor learner may experience in learning to read, using auditory distractions on a taped lecture followed by a quiz, following directions on a standardized reading test, teaching minilessons to classmates, taking a standardized reading test, assuming the role of a teacher who is faced with a specific problem, and playing games developed for teaching specific reading skills to children. Also discussed is research aimed at determining the most effective means of teaching preservice teachers the phonic principles. (WR)

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T. Patrick Mullen

"Simulation, Role Playing, and Games in Pre-Service and In-Service Education."

My main education interests are (1) teaching reading to youngsters who are for some reason having difficulty learning to read and (2) training others to teach reading to youngsters who are having learning problems. Teachers, and those training to become teachers, are usually good students with few or no learning problems. Therefore, in order to acquaint teachers with the problems of the poor reader, I have found success in utilizing simulation and role playing. It is not enough that the teacher learn to recognize a poor reader from a good reader, the potential teacher of the handicapped needs to feel a little of fear, struggle, shame, despair of the child who is having difficulty learning. Then, maybe that teacher will be a little less free with such statements as "If you'd only try harder" or "The others are finished, why are you so slow?"

Some ways that I have found useful to create a "feeling" about learning is to teach "mini lessons" in which teachers or teacher trainees are playing the part of "the learner." A reading lesson using "Cryptograms" is an example of one such technique. In order to put the pressure on the adults, I deliberately load the cryptogram alphabet with up-down and right-left mirror reversals and load the vocabulary with fine discrimination problems, both auditory and visual. Words like psychology, physiology, psychiatry, sociology, are difficult enough to differentiate in standard print but become more challenging in cryptogram especially when the cryptograms are deliberately set in upper class letter height to take away from the reader configuration clues.

The objective of such a lesson is not just to back good students against the wall by giving them a feeling about the pressure that poor students may feel in a learning task, but more important to give them an opportunity to examine and to discuss the strategies that they began to employ to learn, and to realize the importance of teaching others learning strategy, especially strategies that work well in learning to read.

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To some students, especially those blessed with excellent visual memory, the cryptogram is a fun game with little or no challenge. The example I will pass to you now is an example of an adult textbook as it might appear to a learning disabled reader (Pass out Example A). I ask that you read this passage, an example of how a page might look to a child with perceptual problems, and answer the four questions at the bottom of the page. Since the letters on this page are real letters of the alphabet, most people take the problem of decoding the page more seriously and find it more frustrating than cryptograms. My talking while you are trying to translate or decode is deliberate to provide for you a feeling of frustration due to auditory distraction. How many are not finished? (Read Translation of Example A)

Other ways I've used to simulate the "feeling" of problems in learning are to provide auditory distraction on a taped lecture followed by a quiz; the use of mirrors for art and writing activities to feel the struggle to correct a reversal problem caused by a true perceptual problem; and the use of special glasses to distort visual images. "A Walk in Another Pair of Shoes" a filmstrip distributed by CANHC, P.O. Box 604, Los Angeles, California 90053 also provides a feeling of perceptual problems.

An activity I particularly like to use with experienced teachers is a direction following sub test of the Detroit Test of Learning Aptitude. (Show page 13 of Detroit Test Student Record Booklet on overhead - Test #18 Oral Directions. Read numbers 11, 13, & 16 directions as examples.)

Often even experienced teachers forget how confusing directions can be and how distracting additional parts to a direction can be to auditory memory.

Then too, how long has it been since a teacher or college student has had a standardized test; one in which they are timed, one in which they must sit and listen to lengthy directions and examples; one in which they must mark answers on a complicated and confusing answer sheet. I know no better way

to teach teachers why children need breaks between sub tests than to subject teachers to a standardized test. A test aimed at upper elementary or junior high reading achievement will do fine. From my own background, I have found that having to go through the procedures of becoming a client in a reading clinic as an assignment for training in counseling taught me a great deal about the frustration of testing, waiting and filling out forms.

In order to give the undergraduate some experience like teaching, role playing in college classes may be structured so that prospective teachers try mini lessons on their classmates. Feedback in the form of written and oral evaluations may be helpful but the use of video tape is most useful. This is true of experienced teachers as well, one learns a lot from seeing ones self on video tape. Activities that seem most meaningful to college students include storytelling, reporting on childrens books, reading stories, creative dramatics, choral reading, writing manuscript on the chalkboard, making ditto and mimeograph masters and running off the masters on appropriate machines, and using flannel boards. Peers seem to make poor "children" when it comes to role playing in attempts at teaching vocabulary, phonics or basic reading lessons, but do excellently as "children" when listening to stories.

Some of the more technical aspects of teaching reading can be simulated in a problems laboratory type setting in which the teacher or trainee assumes the role of the teacher faced with specific problems or a group discusses (like a staffing) a specific problem or case. Problems may be the correcting and analyzing of a simulated example of a child's work like a workbook page or a story written. It may be a record sheet of one or more diagnostic tests that is to be analyzed and discussed. It may be a tape recording of a child reading that needs to be analyzed or a recording of a child telling a story for the teacher to take as a language experience dictation and then set up into a reading lesson. Through simulation and utilizing sample tests and children's

work teachers can be trained to diagnose reading problems and plan remediation for those reading problems. With role playing it is also possible to simulate parent conferences, and staffings as well as telephone confrontations.

Research has established that the lecture method is inferior to a variety of approaches in college teaching. Research also shows that teachers teach as they were taught; or that we often follow the example set for us. I try to use games to break the lecture system and establish with my students that the use of games with children can be a worthwhile learning experience. The use of commercially prepared games intended for children gives teacher trainees an opportunity to acquaint themselves with enjoyable activities for children and also can be a worthwhile learning experience, and also can teach or re-teach or review skills that were unknown or forgotten yet important to teaching.

There are several standard game types that teachers should be familiar with: Old Maid (a two of a kind matching game) and an adaptation then of "Concentration" set up by removing the "extra" card; Rummy (3 or 4 of a kind matching); Bingo (match to sample visual to visual or auditory to visual); Dominoes (one that most don't seem to know); and Board games with endless possibilities.

I am presently working on a set of games aimed at teaching and reminding teachers about basics of teaching aspects of reading (diagnosis, phonics, comprehension, listening). But, while these are being clarified and refined, I continue to rely largely on the commercially produced games for teaching children such as the Lyons and Carnahan Phonics we Use Game Kit and the Spelling games from the same company, also the Gold Cup Games by Bomar have been quite useful. I have found that students clarify skills, formulate excellent questions about teaching the skills and use of the games, access their own need for practice or learning of phonics generalizations. Students report understanding of possible confusion children may have in learning a skill or following directions.

After observing what seemed to be a worthwhile activity in my methods classes, I decided to research the worth of the utilization of games in the Reading Methods class. As a measure of learning, I decided to hold time constant and require that students prove their knowledge of phonics by their ability to generate at least five words that follow a specific phonic principle (tests administered before study and after each treatment.) Requirements were kept simple like long and short vowels, initial, medial, and final consonants, and simple blends and consonant digraphs. Subjects taken from Introduction to Teaching of Reading class (mainly college of education juniors) were randomly assigned to three treatment orders, and all students received all three treatments: (1) Lecture (consisting of definitions of terms, examples and diacritical marks and basic rules of phonics, (2) Introduction to phonics programs in which lecture and small group discussions are based on examples of programs for teaching phonics those specifically considered were Phonovisual, Alpha I and Linguistic (Merrill); (3) Playing games, in which the Phonics We Use Game Kit by Lyons and Carnahan was used and students worked in groups of 4 or 5 choosing games randomly.

An Analysis of Variance on the data established a significant difference (.01) favoring the game procedures for overall phonic knowledge. Using a Newman-Keuls comparison further data analysis showed the game procedures significantly superior (.01) in establishing phonic knowledge of consonants, digraphs, blends and hard and soft c and g. However, no difference was shown between games and study of phonics programs on generating knowledge of vowels; both of these treatments were significantly (.01) different from the lecture method and the pre-knowledge measure.

It would seem that in addition to providing a variety of instruction for the introductory class on the teaching of reading and a model of instruction different from lecture the use of educational games has a significant positive educational result.

Example A

Isusgect th at thechil b wi tha learn ing disadility mu stfre quent lyex ger i e n O e a n alicein won terl an bex is ten ceof ten vef in b tba the mu st co ge wi tha n unsta dlew or lb in consistentabul tsa nd haphaza r b gerceg tio nshes c ou Fuseb dyth ecra zys ym dols we piv ehim gress ureb dy t he leng tho ft imei nwic hto b of tamb frus tra teb dhyı sregea teb fa ily resh eboe sno tlear no hetra bit lon alw ayamn sow em u stte achh imbif here ntlyl e emet e llv ownor ead out h i m the ch ilbve thale ar mimp bisa dili tyis achil dof aver epe or ado veanerap e lwtel lip enc ebects oft hen enrowotor sys tew way dep res eut or ab sen th ow ener su chachilg wa yshom distur dance sin per ceg tiou couceg tiou aca bew id ac hieve went an dew o tion aldeh anior ei th erseg arat elyo rin cow din a tinont he sedist urdance sar euto bue griwar ilyt oseu sory lo sswor or hand i cags men talre tarbatiou. emot lon alb is turdancesore mus ron wental bisabuantapee ach ch ilbisa niudiuib uald uts omeg ene ral ch a r act eris tic sbo exist. The sei mill lista ndme mi llbis cuss the min preat erbe tail so me oft he wo re gre nalevet syw gto ws ap pear tod e l) bis or ber sof wotor ac tivity 2 d. so r der sofe wotio nal ity 3 d sor be Rs oF ber ceptiou 4 - Di sorbersoFcoucegtion 5 D. s o r de r s o f a t t en tion

Disorders ofwewory

NOW letsbicus ssowe ofyonr "bercegtual grodlews."

1. li stsom eo F the Th in pst hat wa bey onrr eab in pt as kwor ebiff icult
2. l is tso we o Fr he thi ng s yon bib t haten ad led yo utor eab this pag.
3. Wh atmere so we of yo re ac ti cu so rt ho ug tsw hi leatt emgt in gtor ea bthis.
4. list an yib easy ou ha veth at ca nde sneb tohe lg ot her tea che r sex ger len ce gercegtu alp ro dlems.

Example of Translation

GOBBLYGOOK

I suspect that the child with a learning disability must frequently experience an "Alice in Wonderland" existance. Often we find that he must cope with an unstable world, inconsistent adults and haphazard perceptions. He's confused by the crazy symbols we give him, pressured by the length of time in which to do it and frustrated by his repeated failures. He does not learn the traditional way and so we must teach him differently. Let me tell you more about him.

1. The child with a learning disability is a child of average or above average intelligence.

2. Defects of the neuromotor system may be present or absent; however, such a child may show disturbances in perception, conception, academic achievement and emotional behavior either separately or in combination. These disturbances are <u>not</u> due primarily to sensory loss, motor handicaps, mental retardation, emotional disturbances or environmental disadvantage. Each child is an individual but some general characteristics do exist. These I will list and we will discuss them in greater detail.

3. Some of the more prevalent symptoms appear to be:

    1. Disorders of Motor Activity
    2. Disorders of Emotionality
    3. Disorders of Perception
    4. Disorders of Conception
    5. Disorders of Attention
    6. Disorders of Memory

Now let's discuss some of your "perceptual problems."

1. List some of the things that made your reading task more difficult.
2. List some of the things you did that enabled you to read this paper.
3. What were some of your reactions or thoughts while attempting to read this?
4. List any ideas you have that can be used to help other teachers experience perceptual problems.

11. Put the first letter of the first word in the first circle; the second letter of the first word in the second circle; the last letter of the first word in the fourth circle; and the last letter of the last word in the last circle. Do it now!

12. Put a cross in the big square; a letter F in the triangle; a number four in the little square; and a letter H in the big circle. Do it now!

Time allowance is 30 seconds each for numbers 13 to 17, inclusive.

13. Cross out a number that is eight times eight; the number one less than one hundred; the number that is five times five; the number in the fifties; and the fourth number in the line. Do it now!

14. Put the last letter of the second word in the third circle; the first letter of the third word in the fifth circle; and the second letter of the first word in the last circle. Do it now!

15. Draw a line under the letter after S; cross out J and V; and draw a line over the first letter before O. Do it now!

16. Put the third letter of the alphabet in the third figure; a six in the diamond; the letter L in the first circle; a number four in the triangle; and the first letter of the alphabet in the last figure. Do it now!

17. Cross out the even number in a square; the odd number in the second triangle; the number in the third circle; the

18. Oral Directions

(See pages 87-91 of Handbook)

Score.....

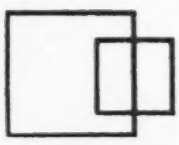
1

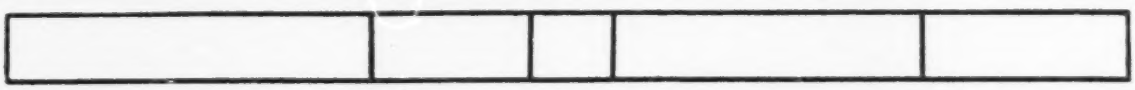
2

3

4

5

6 

7 

8

9 A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q

10 82 67 18 27 42 15 72 10 34 36 48 56

11

12

13 99 52 41 71 93 64 31 27 47 82 25 68

14

15 H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

16

17